

# *Best Care EAP* Health WORKS

A NEWSLETTER TO PROMOTE HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Spring  
2005



## Spring into LIFE!

### *Rejoice! It's Spring!*

The changing of the seasons reminds us that life is a series of transitions. Just as winter retreats and spring ushers in the promise of new life, the rhythm of our lives changes. A new job, a new baby, retirement, marriage, death, divorce ... these are all major life transitions that, like the changing of the seasons, can herald the end of one period of life and the birth of another.

Use the suggestions that follow to help you anticipate change and welcome new opportunities with a "spring" in your step.

### *Graduating Into the Work Force*

When a student graduates from college, a whole new world awaits. Hours once spent in the classroom, taking notes, completing tests and applying knowledge to hypothetical situations are now filled with real deadlines, tests with no definite answers and grades that have more to do with dollar signs than the first few letters of the alphabet.

Because the emotional roller coaster of transitioning from college life into the work force can be taxing, it is beneficial to have some survival techniques in place to help ease the stress and pave the way to a successful first career. Try incorporating some of the tips below and you'll move to the head of the class in the workplace.



- Always arrive at work on time and stick to your allotted lunch hour.
- Find a mentor. Look for someone on your career path who will help you learn the ropes.
- Dress appropriately. Observe what others are wearing and follow suit.
- Do not join in office gossip.
- Do your homework. Learn about your new position and what is expected of you.
- Be polite and use proper telephone and email etiquette.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- Take deadlines seriously.



You can also expand your knowledge and marketability by continuing to learn and grow. Attend a seminar, take an online class or sign-up for graduate level classes to show your dedication to bettering yourself and your position in the organization.

*Let Best Care EAP help you add value to your employees. Training opportunities in management, team and individual success are available. Ask your Human Resources representative for more information.*

## Who? Me? A Parent?

Few changes are as life-altering as the birth of a baby.

Melissa Major-Weddle, MBA, Coordinator of Account Services for Best Care EAP, understands that transition into motherhood. “Working, being a wife and dog-mama of two demanding poodles and maintaining a home ... I didn’t think life could get any more complicated. When the words, ‘It’s a girl,’ sunk in, I didn’t know how I would ever keep it all together. But you do. My priorities have changed. Now it is not as important to accomplish my own dreams as it is to watch my daughter accomplish hers,” she says.

Working together with your spouse can help ease the transition and lower stress. Before the baby is born, take time to discuss how you and your partner were raised to see where you share common ground and where your histories differ. Then decide what steps you can take to provide a warm, loving home for your child. Major-Weddle says, “A baby changes everything, including the relationship you have with your spouse. I think it’s important to work on strengthening that relationship before the baby comes. This includes discussing parenting styles and agreeing on how you plan on sharing responsibilities.”

New fathers can deal with the wide range of emotions and inevitable changes of parenthood by getting to know his baby. Establish a strong bond with the child. Take the baby for a walk, talk to her, sing to him or read a book together. Before dad knows it, those pre-baby days will seem like they happened a lifetime ago.



For many new mothers, caring for the baby becomes second nature, but once it’s time to return to work, the real adjustment begins. Finding an acceptable day-care arrangement and transitioning back into the work force are just two of the hurdles new mothers must face. Planning for this transition can help immensely when it’s time to return to work. “Going back to work was much easier than I expected. The transition has been smooth due in part to a flexible employer and a trusted care provider,” Major-Weddle says.

*Babies require constant care and attention, but don’t forget about mom and dad. They also deserve a little tender love and care.*

- Taking time to care for yourselves by eating right.
- Getting adequate amounts of sleep (as much as the baby will allow).
- Accepting help from family and friends.
- Getting away for some “me” time and “us” time.

*Whether you have little ones or are thinking about starting a family, your Best Care EAP can provide emotional support and help you keep it all together.*



## Working Toward Retirement

Reaching retirement can be a time of excitement and anticipation, but for some, impending retirement can be a great source of stress. “Who will I be without my job?” “What will I do all day?” “Will I have enough money to live comfortably?” Advanced planning is the key.

According to Bridget Rolenc, Community Networking Manager for Methodist Health System, who has a certificate in gerontology, knowing yourself and how you handle change is the best way to know how you will handle the retirement transition. “The way we live is the way we live. Sounds simple ... but it is true. If we balked at change in our youth, more than likely we will when we get older. The nice thing is that it is never too late to change,” Rolenc says.

People who feel their identity closely tied to their jobs find it more difficult to leave the work force. “How we answer the question, ‘What do you do?’ can really make or break the way we move into retirement,” Rolenc says. “People who answer this question with their job title are going to have difficulty when that career is gone. I heard someone say that she started in life as a mother, transitioned into the manager of a company, and now has a more important job as the CEO of her life. How exciting is that? I think if we want to take charge of our lives, CEO is a great title!”

Making the initial break from a career can be the hardest part. Decide how you will replace your work routine with your new retirement routine. Make a list of the things you want to accomplish in life and put these plans on your calendar. Focus less on your last day on the job and think more about your first day of retirement. Make firm plans for these first few days to avoid boredom and anxiety.

Rolenc says what we choose to do in retirement is the biggest indicator of how we will make the transition. “If we decide to just sit, then we really miss the boat,” she says. “Enjoying each and every second that is given and sharing that time with others will lead to a more fulfilling life, especially in retirement.”

### *Rolenc suggests using the following tips to transition into a happy retirement:*

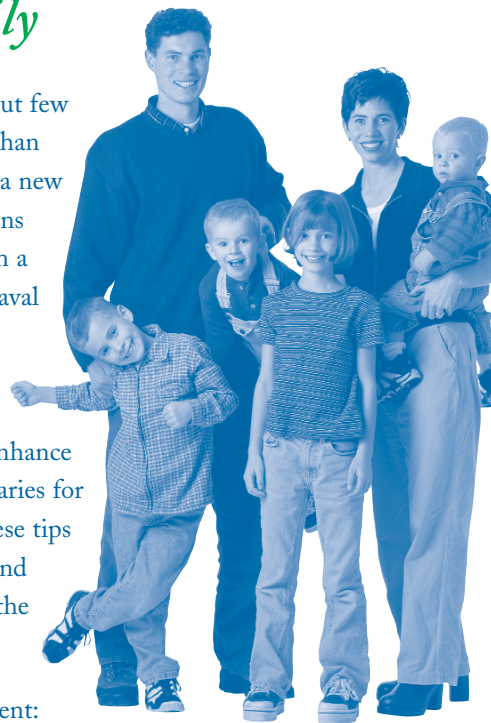
- Keep a positive attitude.
- Stay active.
- Take actions to avoid feeling lonely.
- Ask for help when you need it mentally, physically, emotionally and financially.
- Eat a balanced diet and exercise regularly.
- Keep learning.
- Surround yourself with the people you love.
- Keep in touch with family only if they are receptive and loving.
- Don't take guilt trips because things didn't work out the way you wanted them to.
- Laugh often, long and hard.

*Best Care EAP can help in all stages of life. A professional counselor can provide strategies for making a smooth transition.*



## *A Recipe for Blending a Happy Family*

Parenting can be difficult, but few roles are more challenging than that of a stepparent. When a new stepmother or stepfather joins the household, there is often a time of confusion and upheaval that is felt by adults and children alike. Take time before the marriage to make the decisions necessary to enhance relationships and set boundaries for the new family unit. Try these tips to help ease the transition and get your new family off on the right foot.



If you are the biological parent:

- Don't expect too much of your new spouse. He/she is adjusting to a new marriage, and a redefinition as a parent.
- Don't rush things. Realize that love and caring take time to develop, so allow the stepparent/stepchild relationship to grow gradually.
- Be sure to listen.
- Make time for your new spouse without the children present.
- You are the one who has intimate connections with every member of your new family, so see yourself as the “glue” that pulls this new family together.

If you are the stepparent:

- Don't expect that the children will accept you immediately. A new family dynamic can be confusing to children, so give them space and time to explore their emotions.
- Give yourself time to define your role in the family. You may feel like the “odd man out” sometimes, but do your best to embrace new traditions and roll with the punches.
- Don't get in the middle of family arguments and don't take the lead with discipline.
- NEVER criticize the biological parent. This is a sure way to sabotage the children's good feelings toward you.
- Work to establish a good bond with your new spouse. A strong parental foundation is the key to a happy family.

*Let Best Care EAP help you overcome the challenges of starting a new family. Counseling services are available for children as well as adults.*

## Did you know?

Best Care EAP recognizes that your schedule is hectic. Balancing work and life obligations can be challenging, there's often not enough time during the day. That's why your Best Care EAP offers evening and weekend appointments. For emergencies or critical incidents, a professional counselor is available to take your call 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Solutions to life's challenges are only a phone call away. For your confidential appointment please call, (402) 354-8000 or (800) 666-8606.

Prefer to email? Simply send us a message at [eap@BestCareEAP.org](mailto:eap@BestCareEAP.org) and a professional staff member will respond within 48 hours, M-F.

Just want additional information about your EAP benefit? Then check out our Web site at [www.BestCareEAP.org](http://www.BestCareEAP.org). Click on Member Login, then enter the user name and password. User name: member Password: bestcare

## Thank you...

*for reading HealthWorks. We hope you enjoyed the issue. We aim to improve HealthWorks with every issue, but we need your help.*

Write to [eap@BestCareEAP.org](mailto:eap@BestCareEAP.org) and let us know what you like and what changes you'd like to see. Who knows, maybe one of your suggestions will show up in our next edition.

*Best Care EAP is a unique benefit provided to you by your employer. It is a free assessment, short-term counseling and referral service to help you and your dependent family members work through personal problems that may adversely affect home and work relationships. If a referral to an outside agency or specialist is made, only then do expenses become your responsibility. To arrange a confidential appointment, call*

**(402) 354-8000 or (800) 666-8606.**

*For more information about Best Care EAP, check us out at:*  
[www.BestCareEAP.org](http://www.BestCareEAP.org)

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• Graduation Into the Work Force • Who? Me? A Parent?  
• A Recipe for Blending a Happy Family  
• Working Toward Retirement

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